



STATE RECORDS COMMISSION

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## **SRC Standard 7**

# **STATE ARCHIVES RETAINED BY GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS**

**A Recordkeeping Standard for  
Government Organizations**

**State Records Commission of WA  
Perth, Western Australia**

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**SRC Standard 7 – State Archives Retained by Government Organizations**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SCOPE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>DEFINITIONS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Principle 1 – Application to Retain State Archives</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Principle 2 – Environmental Conditions</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Principle 3 – Storage Mechanisms</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Principle 4 – Security and Disaster Management</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Principle 5 – Access</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Principle 6 – Control</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Principle 7 – Preservation</b>	<b>10</b>

## **SRC Standard 7 – State Archives Retained by Government Organizations**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Standard, established under section 61(1) of the *State Records Act 2000*, is to provide for a government organization to retain a State archive beyond the compulsory transfer period, and to ensure the safe storage, preservation, handling and access to a State archive retained by a government organization with State Records Commission approval.

This Standard supersedes *SRC Standard 5: Compulsory Transfer of Archives, 2002* and *SRC Standard 7: Storage of State Archives retained by State Organizations through an approved Recordkeeping Plan, 2008*.

### **BACKGROUND**

Under section 32(1) of the *State Records Act 2000*, a government organization must transfer a State archive that is under its control to the State archives collection when it becomes twenty-five (25) years old, unless the organization's Recordkeeping Plan says otherwise.

If an organization needs to retain custody of a State archive beyond the compulsory transfer period, the organization must apply and obtain approval, via its Recordkeeping Plan, from the State Records Commission. In order to approve such custodial arrangements, the State Records Commission must be assured that the archive will be maintained in appropriate conditions and will remain accessible in accordance with the relevant provisions of the *State Records Act 2000*.

Archives in digital formats and some analogue (physical) formats (particularly audio-visual) have retention periods greater than one generation of technology. These items must be preserved and remain accessible for use either using open standard, non-proprietary formats, or using equipment and software able to access the formats. The minimum compliance requirements outlined in this Standard aim to ensure that government organizations implement controls and practices that will support the proper management of State archives that remain in their custody.

NOTE: An organization may request to transfer a State archive to the State archives collection at any time before it becomes 25 years old. If the Director of State Records is unable to accept the transfer, the Director will advise accordingly.

### **SCOPE**

The principles and minimum compliance requirements in this Standard apply to all government organizations as defined in the *State Records Act 2000*.

This Standard does not apply to government records that are not State archives.

## **SRC Standard 7 – State Archives Retained by Government Organizations**

### **DEFINITIONS**

Refer to the *Glossary of Terms* produced by the State Records Office of Western Australia available on the State Records Office website.

## **SRC Standard 7 – State Archives Retained by Government Organizations**

### **Principle 1 – Application to Retain State Archives**

**Government organizations are to apply to retain a State archive beyond the compulsory transfer period of 25 years.**

#### **Rationale**

In general, records have a currency or administrative use of 7 to 10 years. Some records may carry a business use of 20 years or more. If records are designated as State archives, the Act requires they are to be transferred to the State archives collection when they are 25 years old to be kept in perpetuity.

A government organization may determine that it has a business need to retain a State archive for official purposes and that the State archive should not be transferred to the State archives collection.

In applying to retain a State archive beyond the compulsory transfer period, the State Records Commission is to be apprised of the organization's reasons for keeping the State archive and provided with assurance that the State archive will be properly kept and accessible.

The decision to retain a State archive beyond the compulsory transfer period is to be reviewed every five years as part of the review of the organization's Recordkeeping Plan.

#### **Minimum Compliance Requirements**

The government organization's Recordkeeping Plan must provide evidence to adduce that the State archive that is not to be transferred:

1. Is required by the organization for ongoing official purposes beyond the compulsory transfer period (i.e. the justification for non-transfer).
2. Is identified in an approved Disposal Authority.
3. Will be kept in accordance with Principles 2 to 7 in this Standard.

**Principle 2 – Environmental Conditions**

**Government organizations ensure that State archives are stored in environmental conditions appropriate to their format.**

**Rationale**

State archives are to be stored in areas or facilities that are suitable for archival storage in accordance with international and national standards. State archives require storage in controlled conditions to ensure their continued usability.

Details of minimum requirements for environmental conditions for the storage of archives can be found in the *Archival Storage Specification* produced by the State Records Office, available on the State Records Office website.

**Minimum Compliance Requirements**

Government organizations must ensure that:

1. All premises and facilities used for the storage of State archives maintain environmental conditions that meet those described in the *Archival Storage Specification*.
2. The location of storage areas and storage facilities supports the preservation of State archives; minimizes risks; and enables timely and efficient retrieval.

**Principle 3 – Storage Mechanisms**

**Government organizations ensure that State archives are stored appropriate to their format.**

**Rationale**

State archives must be stored on shelving, in enclosures and on media that contributes to their ongoing preservation and accessibility.

Organizations must ensure that any digital State archives are stored on media appropriate for long-term viability. Technology dependent media must be subject to regular integrity checks to ensure the information remains intact and usable. Technology dependent media must be monitored and periodically refreshed to prevent data loss through media degradation and format obsolescence.

Details of minimum requirements for storage used for archives in a variety of formats can be found in the *Archival Storage Specification* produced by the State Records Office.

**Minimum Compliance Requirements**

Government organizations must ensure that:

1. Storage used for State archives is in compliance with those described for each format type in the *Archival Storage Specification*.
2. Technology dependent media is of a format that remains usable by the government organization.

**Principle 4 – Security and Disaster Management**

**Government organizations ensure that State archives are safeguarded and secure.**

**Rationale**

State archives are to be stored securely, with steps taken to manage any potential threat to their security, including appropriate authentication controls for access. State archives must be protected from intentional or unintentional damage, unauthorized tampering, or alteration. Organizations must take special care to ensure their information systems are secure, reliable and capable of maintaining information that is acceptable for business, legal, audit and other purposes.

**Minimum Compliance Requirements**

Government organizations must ensure that:

1. Protocols are in place that determine who within the organization has responsibility for managing authorized access to its State archives.
2. A disaster management plan is in place, as per the requirements of *SRC Standard 2: Recordkeeping Plans*, Principle 4 - Preservation.
3. Procedures are in place to identify and respond to incidents which have the potential to cause damage or attempted security breaches of storage areas and of systems that manage and store archives.
4. Access to archives is secured and auditable.
5. Copies or backups of archives held for disaster recovery purposes are secured to the same level as the originals.

## **SRC Standard 7 – State Archives Retained by Government Organizations**

### **Principle 5 – Access**

**Government organizations ensure that State archives are accessible.**

#### **Rationale**

Under Part 6 of the *State Records Act 2000*, the public has a right of access to State archives not in the State archives collection, in accordance with the stipulations of the Act. Any right that a person may have to be given access to a restricted access archive is to be determined under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

Organizations must be able to locate and retrieve State archives when required for access. Computer systems and technology dependent media which hold archives must be available for authorized access, including the ability to run an application on appropriate hardware and operating systems for the purpose of accessing information held in State archives.

Suitable services must be made available for the secure and protected access to archives within the organization.

#### **Minimum Compliance Requirements**

Government organizations must ensure that:

- 1 Policies and procedures are in place that enable the provision of public access to State archives of the organization in accordance with section 45 of the *State Records Act 2000*.
- 2 The public has access to information that identifies State archives in the custody of the organization, subject to any written law or conditions that have been outlined in the organization's Recordkeeping Plan.

## **SRC Standard 7 – State Archives Retained by Government Organizations**

### **Principle 6 – Control**

**Government organizations ensure that State archives are controlled.**

#### **Rationale**

An organization with custody of State archives must have a control system to help manage, locate, retrieve, describe and make accessible the State archives that it holds.

Information about the State archives in the custody of organizations must be able to be quantified and this information preserved.

#### **Minimum Compliance Requirements**

Government organizations must ensure that:

1. State archives are registered in a system to identify and provide control of such information.

## **Principle 7 – Preservation**

**Government organizations ensure that State archives are preserved for the long term and ensure that both analogue and digital formats remain usable.**

### **Rationale**

State archives require preservation actions to ensure they remain usable for the long term. Organizations must ensure that they take appropriate actions, whether passive or active, to preserve these items.

Incorrect handling of State archives may degrade or destroy the integrity of an archive. For the purpose of ensuring safe custody and protecting the condition of a State archive, organizations are to institute appropriate handling protocols. Where appropriate, archives may be reproduced for access purposes to assist in maintaining the originals in good condition.

Archives have a life greater than one generation of technology. Therefore, information must be preserved and remain usable by migrating or rendering to current file formats, or to open standard, non-proprietary formats, whenever applications are upgraded or a new format comes into more common use.

In conducting migration activities, it is the responsibility of the organization to define the essential characteristics of digital records that must not change as a result of migration processes. Organizations must also conduct testing to check that content and essential characteristics of digital records are not compromised by migration processes.

Any organization undertaking a technology upgrade, or adopting new or updated business systems, must ensure that the migration of information into the new system is undertaken so that the information is usable.

### **Minimum Compliance Requirements**

Government organizations must ensure that:

1. State archives in digital format are stored in an appropriate file format.
2. Systems planning, design and implementation includes the provision for conversion or migration of the previous (or legacy) systems data.
3. Strategies and procedures for the preservation and usability of digital information are developed, implemented and reviewed at regular intervals and staff are aware of and trained in these processes.
4. Protocols are in place for the handling of State archives that encourage proper handling practices.

## **SRC Standard 7 – State Archives Retained by Government Organizations**

5. Cleaning and repair of State archives which are fragile or show signs of degradation is only carried out in consultation with the State Records Office.
6. The process for digitization of State archives does not damage the original items.

**For further information regarding this Standard contact  
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